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**Literature**  
Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



**Inherit the Wind**

by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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# Literature Teaching Unit

*Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide*



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## Objectives

*By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:*

1. identify the protagonist in the play.
2. state the significance and origin of the play's title, relating it to specific events in the play and discussing its function in one of the play's key themes.
3. discuss the importance of an impartial judge, name at least four instances of prejudice in the trial, and discuss how they could be remedied.
4. explain the difference between a logical argument and an emotional argument, giving examples of both in the play.
5. discuss the political significance of the Scopes trial as a landmark in the separation of church and state debate, and identify at least three relevant current political issues.
6. identify the differences between flat and round characters and cite examples of each type.
7. offer an opinion, backed up with examples from *Inherit the Wind*, on whether one's conscience or one's duty should win out if the two conflict.
8. define the types of irony and identify two examples in the play.
9. identify both positive and negative traits in Brady and Drummond.
10. identify allusions in the play.
11. identify examples of simile and metaphor in the play.
12. identify foreshadowing in the play.
13. discuss the purpose of stage directions.

### Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. In Act One, Rachel says that a schoolteacher, as a public servant, should do what the law and the school board want him to do. Explain why you agree or disagree. Are there any circumstances, in your opinion, in which one's conscience should overrule one's duty?
2. At some points in Act Two—for example, when he calls Brady “Almighty” and bows to the crowd—Drummond seems to become more interested in humiliating Brady than in calmly making his point. Does this weaken your opinion of Drummond? Why do you think he does it?
3. In what way does Hornbeck's speech style differ from that of the other characters?
4. Why do you think the authors divide Hornbeck's speeches into short lines, rather than printing them in paragraphs as they do for the other characters?
5. Although he condemns it, Brady proudly admits that he has not and does not ever intend to read Darwin's book. Explain Brady's reasoning. What is your opinion of the way he believes?
6. At the end of the play, Drummond says that Brady has much “greatness” in him. What, in your opinion are Brady's strengths and positive characteristics?
7. What negative traits does Drummond have? Which characters in the play exhibit both positive and negative qualities? How do such characters add depth to the drama?
8. What does it mean to “inherit the wind”? Hornbeck suggests that the quotation would be a good obituary for Brady. How does Brady “disturb his own house”?
9. Consider the use of humor in the play. Find at least two instances in which a character uses humor cruelly, at the expense of another character.
10. Why does Hornbeck call Drummond a hypocrite at the end of the play? Do you agree with Hornbeck's assessment? Support your opinion with details from the play.
11. Bert's case is about the separation of church and state, an issue still hotly debated in politics today. The central question in *Inherit the Wind* is whether the church has the right to determine what is taught in public schools. Name at least three current issues that show that full separation of church and state has not yet taken place.
12. When we read a play, stage directions tell us more than simply which way the characters move, when they enter and exit, and what tones of voice they use. List three other types of information learned solely from the stage directions in *Inherit the Wind*.

# Inherit the Wind

## Act One, Scene I

### VOCABULARY

**agnostic**—one who neither denies nor admits the existence of God  
**benign**—gracious; harmless  
**blithely**—casually  
**caricatured**—depicted in an exaggerated way, usually as a means of mocking the subject  
**contempt**—disrespect  
**cooler**—slang for “jail”  
**dogma**—a point of view or belief put forth without sufficient proof  
**extradite**—to surrender a criminal to the authorities where the crime occurred  
**flivver**—a small, cheap automobile  
**galluses**—suspenders  
**heretic**—one who disagrees with established church beliefs  
**hinterland**—a remote region  
**hurdy-gurdy**—a stringed instrument operated with a crank  
**impassively**—emotionlessly  
**indict**—to charge someone with a crime  
**infidel**—a non-believer  
**levity**—lightheartedness  
**monkeyshines**—pranks  
**pariah**—an outcast  
**privy**—an outhouse  
**repast**—a meal  
**rube**—an unsophisticated person  
**unctuously**—smugly insincere  
**vagrant**—a bum  
**venireman**—a member of a group from which jurors are drawn

1. What is the setting of the play?

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2. What types of information do the stage directions provide for the reader?

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**Act Two, Scene II**

## VOCABULARY

**apostles**—supporters  
**audacity**—arrogance  
**effrontery**—shameless boldness  
**heresies**—sacrilegious opinions  
**imbecilities**—unintelligent ideas  
**incontrovertible**—impossible to argue against or reverse  
**perdition**—damnation  
**unorthodox**—not traditional

1. In addition to Bert's fate, what larger issue does Drummond think is on trial in this case?

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2. Does Howard testify that he believes everything that Mr. Cates told him?

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3. What causes Cates' outburst during Rachel's testimony?

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4. How many scientific experts testify for the defense?

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5. Who is the biblical expert Drummond calls to testify for the defense? Why is the choice of this person ironic?

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4. Paraphrase Drummond's story about "Golden Dancer." Explain how the story relates to the trial.

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5. At the end of his rocking horse story, Drummond says, "And if it's a lie—show it up for what it really is!" In the context of the trial, explain two different ways this quote is true.

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6. Why does the Radio Man believe that the people in the courtroom are "making history today"?

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7. When the mayor tells the judge to "let things simmer down," what is he really asking the judge to do?

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8. The stage direction, "The radio man starts at this rumbling thunder, so close to the ear of his delicate child" is an example of which literary term?

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9. Why is the radio man "annoyed" and why does Hornbeck "smirk" when Brady says, "Kindly signal me while I am speaking, if my voice does not have sufficient projection for your radio apparatus"?

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